

THE GREEN CALDRON

A Magazine of Freshman Writing



Arnold Ostwald: <i>First Days in a New World</i>	1
Carl Hartman: <i>Taken From Life</i>	5
Roy Casper: <i>Meet the Consul</i>	8
Helen Dean Miller: <i>Growing Pains</i>	12
James Collins: ". . . . and the livin' is easy."	14
Kenneth Sellers: <i>Doc Porter's Office</i>	15
Hershel Herzog: <i>Newsboy's Saturday Night</i>	17
Helen D. Miller: <i>Spare the Club</i>	19
A. L. Potts: <i>Blades</i>	20
Gilbert McConnell: <i>Snake in the Grass</i>	22
Paul Youle: <i>The Industrial Spy</i>	26
L. W. Wilkes: <i>Home Life in Manila</i>	32
Robert Wright: <i>Hell on Earth</i>	35
Wallace Frank: <i>Union Now vs. Union Later</i>	37
(Material written in Rhetoric I and II): <i>Rhet as Writ</i>	40

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First Days in a New World

ARNOLD OSTWALD

Rhetoric II, Theme 11, 1941-1942

IT WAS GOOD TO GET SOME SLEEP. THE PAST WEEKS had really been too much of a rush for my easy-going nature. First, having to leave Liverpool, just to get into a couple of air raids in Manchester, then out to a quiet farm in Lancashire, whose stables probably could not have been cleaned without my valuable assistance. Then a mad dash to London to get all my papers together and back to Liverpool to catch that diminutive freighter which should carry me in its cargo to that land, America.

Well, I am here now. But the only thing I know about this mysterious country is that its 'railroads—or at least the trains from Montreal to New York—have wonderful reclining seats. And I have never felt more tired and worn out in my sixteen years and ten months of life. I am also somewhat afraid of this new land, where everything is so overwhelmingly big and all people are educated and superior. Of course I know better, but I remember now too that old-world picture of a mixture of cowboys, millionaires, skyscrapers, gangsters, and Indians, that is America. Maybe I'd better get some sleep, before it is too late.

Somebody wakes me up rather violently. It is the fellow with whom I had to share my cabin on the boat—I remember distinctly that he never changed his socks. He says: "This is where we get out," and gets out. So I get out too.

Outside of the fact that people seem to be in a particular hurry—apparently they have to catch a train or something—this railway station—it is Pennsylvania Station, which has recently been glorified by a popular song—looks just like any station in the old country. I walk up and down the platform, and a medium-sized man with a straw hat—I have never seen quite normal people wear straw hats, and I think it looks rather funny—a man with a straw hat approaches me and says he is looking for a certain Arnold Ostwald. That must be Uncle Joseph, to whom I sent a telegram to meet me at the station. I don't recognize him, however. The last time I saw him, I was three years old, and my memory does not reach that far back. So I tell him that I am Arnold Ostwald, and he says, "I am your Uncle Joseph." He gives me a big kiss, which embarrasses me, because I am not used to being kissed by men. I must have inherited that trait from Father, who always seemed to be embarrassed when he had to kiss me once a year on my birthday, because Mother insisted on it.

So the first thing I hear from this uncle is that I look like a Heini, which does not bother me much, because I don't know what a Heini is. He also tells me that I have changed since he saw me last. Then a very attractive and well-proportioned girl comes running down the platform and says, "I am your cousin Ruth," and gives me a kiss too. I am rather perplexed, because this girl really is not my idea of a cousin, and if I hadn't been so very tired, I would have wished she weren't my cousin. But at the moment I don't really care.

Uncle Joe asks me: "Did you have a good crossing?" and I say, "Yes." He wants to know if I am sleepy, and I say, "Yes." He asks me: "Are you hungry?" and I say, "Yes." So he takes me to some place and gets me something to eat. But I can eat only half of what he gets me, and then I vomit. Uncle Joe expresses the opinion that that is very un-American, and he ought to know, because he has been in this country for nearly thirty years and speaks with only a very slight accent.

Then he takes me through the city and points out all the skyscrapers to me. I am really not interested, because I am so very tired, and when I get to see the Empire State Building, I simply say, "So what?" And Uncle Joe gets very mad, as if he had built it all by himself. But I don't understand, and he explains to me that from now on I will have to admire everything, because that's what Americans like, and that's the right attitude for a refugee to have.

I would like to complain about the unbearable heat now, but that is probably impolite, so I keep quiet.

By this time the uncle has found out that I am really no good, and he takes me out to his house on Long Island. When we arrive, he tells me to put my handbag on the porch, but I don't know what a porch is, because I have never seen a house with one. So Uncle Joseph thinks I'm ignorant. Then some more people come and kiss me, and they introduce themselves as Aunt Mabel and Aunt Erna. Aunt Mabel is Uncle Joseph's wife.

Now I think it's time for me to go to sleep, but they think I should tell them about my interesting experiences and everything. But I tell them I want to go to bed, and they finally let me. When I am just walking up the stairs, a young fellow comes in. He has his hands in his pockets and wears a queer-looking shirt with short tails, which are outside instead of inside his pants. He is my cousin Malcolm, and he goes to college. He yawns and says, "Take it easy, kid." I don't know what he means.

The next morning they make me drink tomato juice. I am not used to that kind of a drink, and they don't like my un-American grimace, which is caused by the juice. Malcolm shows me his car, one of the models that were the last cry toward the end of the twenties. Remembering what the uncle told me, I admire it duly, and Malcolm gives me a dirty look, because he

thinks I am being ironical. He can't understand why I don't know the song "Blueberry Hill," but he is impressed by my ability to handle a slide rule, although I am no engineer. He then takes me to the house of another uncle, whose name is Hugo, and who collects all sorts of alcoholic beverages in his basement. The basement is all fixed up for drinking parties. But when I try to sample some of the drinks, they are all very shocked, because "none of our boys and girls here drink or smoke." I don't really care what kind of an impression I make, but I am sorry for Mother, who will no longer be respected by all the aunts, because she did not manage to educate her son. Only Uncle Hugo, the wine collector, seems to take a liking to me. He takes me into his study, where he writes poetry. He reads some of his verse to me, and I say it's grand, whereupon he presents me with an autographed copy of a volume of his poetry.

This day, too, Uncle Joseph, who has been in this country for nearly thirty years, begins to teach me how to become Americanized. He does not like my dignified stoop, and calls it "poor posture." He makes also fun of my strong British accent, which is really nothing but the King's English, and advises me to acquire a certain amount of slang as soon as possible.

I also get to meet dozens of other relatives, some of whom I knew in Germany. And they are all glad to see me again; but one of them says I am looking funny now. That makes me very self-conscious.

They make me stay with them for two weeks, and I really have a good time as long as the uncles and aunts are not around. Only the terrific heat bothers me, so that I can't eat anything. My cousins are all right; they take me swimming to Jones Beach and show me the World's Fair, which is really something. They also fix me up with a couple of dates—I used to call them appointments, but I am catching on quick now.

Finally the day comes when I have to leave them. Suddenly everybody is very friendly toward me. They all see me off at the station. I am being put on the "Silver Meteor," a train which is even more luxurious than the one on which I came down to New York. It, too, has reclining seats, but I don't want to sleep now. The people on the train are all very nice to each other. Apparently they are looking for traveling company.

By the time we have arrived in Philadelphia, an austere-looking elderly lady has started a serious, religious conversation with a girl who says she goes to the University of Georgia, and with me. She has all sorts of pamphlets and literature, which she begins to read to us now. But I can't understand her, because it is a sort of old-fashioned English, and my command of the English language is still quite inadequate. She also mentions always the exact line, chapter, and book from which she is quoting, so that I am altogether confused. I finally tell her that it is no use, because I am a

Jew, but she says, "That makes no difference," and starts quoting from the Old Testament. I am getting sick of her, so I mention that I am probably going to be an atheist soon, and the lady goes to sit somewhere else.

Then I start to talk with the man that sits behind me. He asks me if I know how to play cards, and I say, "Yes." But I don't know any of the games he knows, and he doesn't know any of the games I know. So he says he wants to teach me a game. He calls it gin rommee or something like that. He wants to play for a drink a game. When I ask him how much a drink is, he says, "A half a buck." But I don't know what a buck is. We play for some time, although I do not understand what it is all about, until he says, "Let's call it quits," and pays me three dollars. Thereupon I go to eat in the dining car.

I am really very happy when I finally arrive in St. Petersburg in the state of Florida. You see, I haven't seen my parents for much more than a year, and they are meeting me at the station. They have been through plenty of trouble, and look older than I remember them. Mother's hair is white. My little sister is there too. She has grown a lot and speaks much better English than I. We are all very happy together. We all walk together down to the house, where we are all going to live from now on. Father notices that I have not grown at all, and I am sorry about that. The house is very nice, though small. It has a beautiful, large garden around itself. That garden, all ours, has trees which I have never seen before. Palms and many sorts of citrus trees. I am very much impressed, but early enough I remember that it is not necessary to admire the garden, because the folks are not yet Americans. So I just say, "So what?" And they all laugh.

The next day, I have to go out to the senior high school, because the term is going to start now, and I have to find out where I will be placed. I go to see the principal and have a long and deep conversation with him, at the end of which I ask him about the class into which he is going to put me. Of course, I don't tell him that I only went through the ninth grade in Germany. He tells me I could take examinations to graduate right away. But I don't want that. So he makes me a senior.

School is a lot of fun here. I am the only refugee in the whole school, so they don't do anything in class but ask me silly questions about Germany and England. They want to know what schools are like over there, what people do, and what people eat. One day a very cute little girl asks me whether they neck in Germany. I don't know what necking means, so she demonstrates it right away. That embarrasses me immensely, because I am not used to doing such things in public and in front of strangers.

Now that I am catching on to everything here in America, I begin to like it. America seems to be all right. I think I'll stay here for good.

Taken From Life

CARL HARTMAN

Rhetoric I, Theme 3, 1941-1942

I MET HIM A LONG TIME AGO. IT WAS IN 1935, TO BE exact, in a little fast-failing music school hidden away deep down in the decaying shambles that is Baltimore's east side. As I said, it was a long time ago, and I can't recall now either what I was doing over in Baltimore's east side or how I happened into old man Kaspar's school of music, but there I was and there he was, and right away we noticed each other. He looked about the same then as he does now, only perhaps a little less baggy under the eyes and not quite so disgusted with life in general. He didn't impress me much then, and I couldn't have impressed him at all—he just remarked wasn't I kind of a young kid to be wandering around that part of town at that hour of the night. It wasn't just a man getting ready to ignore a boy, though. There was a difference. You could tell.

The next week I started taking guitar lessons from him. I'd had several years of piano, and it was easy to talk me into taking up guitar because I was heartily tired of the piano. There was something about him I liked at once; something you can't quite put into words, but it was there, nevertheless. It certainly wasn't his personal appearance. He's slightly less than average height, his hair is never properly cut, and his clothes always give one the impression that he sleeps in them. He looks the sloppiest of anyone I ever saw, with the exception of Carl Sandburg. He has the worst sense of business, even for a musician, this side of the Rocky Mountains. He never has collected and never will collect any appreciable sum of money at one time, for the simple reason that his heart is much too big. The strangest stranger could have the shirt off Harvey's back merely for the asking. He has been married twice and divorced twice because no one could live with his eccentricities for long. Still, he is the best friend I ever had or ever expect to have, male or female, old or young.

We made a strange pair, wandering around town the last few years; a rather ordinary-looking boy in his teens and a beaten-looking man of thirty-eight or so. People have objected to my going around with Harvey on the grounds that he looks like a tramp. People don't, as a rule, like Harvey. The local musicians don't like him because most of them are jealous of him, and other people don't like him because of his extreme individuality. He has very definite ideas about life and art. He plays and writes music for music's sake alone and not for what other people think of it. He has stopped caring what people think of him or what he does. He has almost no close friends except me and an old colored man who is

now arranging for Les Brown's orchestra. He is a member of a vanishing race of true artists, except that he doesn't starve at it because he can get work with almost any band in the East that he wishes. It's just that he can't seem to stick with anybody or stay in one place for long. He left Baltimore one day last spring to play with Paul Whiteman's new band, and in a week he was back in town. People couldn't understand why he quit such a good job to come back to "gigging" around; I didn't even ask him. I knew he couldn't stick anywhere for long where he would be forced to conform with another man's way of doing things. He never could and he never will.

The night last winter after his second wife left him I went down to see him. He wasn't home, and nobody knew where he had gone. I finally found him in a little place uptown where he had met her. It was the only thing smattering of nostalgia I ever saw him indulge in. He wasn't very drunk, just all broken up. I don't think he even knew who I was at first.

"Hey, Harvey," I said.

He didn't look up.

"Time to go home," I said.

"Something wrong with me," he muttered to the tablecloth. "Can't hold on to anything. Something wrong. Queer."

"Let's get out of here. Let's go home and sleep a while," I said.

"Too far to walk. Much too far."

"I got a car. Remember?" I said. "Come on, boy. Time to close up."

"Too far, too long," he muttered. He looked up and smiled. "Know what? Gotta go up to York sometime. Never been there, you know."

He meant York, Pennsylvania. We had been there a dozen times to hear big bands.

"Gotta see York," he mumbled.

I got him home and stuck him under the shower. He came out, dripping and grinning. "Go home now, fella," he said. "Got work to do."

He sat down and worked on arrangements until morning. He always works on arrangements at night. He doesn't do it because it's queer or to be different, but because it's quiet then. He turns out one after another and then won't sell many of them because he's afraid they won't be treated correctly. He's right too. Harvey's music is just like Harvey—all music. Very few people understand either one. Some day his music will be noticed and remembered; it's already being talked about.

But that isn't what Harvey wants. He is always looking about him, searching for something he can't find or can't quite reach; something some people find in religion and others find in family life. Don't think I'm trying to make a second *Young Man With a Horn* out of him as Dorothy Baker did with Bix Beiderbeck. I only want to show that he is one out of many, a person who sincerely believes in and points his life at some one single

thing; a marked man who will love that one thing for better or for worse from the day he is born until the day he dies, world without end.

Most people are composed of two parts: the outside and the inside. Harvey has no outside, no show, no false front. He is all Harvey—sincere, full of earnest belief in the purpose of his life.

I haven't, I guess, actually said a whole lot about his character. If I were his boss and I were asked to fill out his civil service blank and I came to the part that says "Character—good, bad, indifferent," I should check "good" because he is honest in every respect. That is not, however, what I would consider character in this case. He is far more complex than that.

The night this summer before I left the East for good we went downtown to hear Benny Goodman. The man at the door let us in free because we played there often during the winter and he knew us. It looked funny to see Goodman on the same bandstand we knew so well. I wondered dimly how they got the floor plug to work that would never work for us. We sat down and Harvey said, "Lordy, it's cold in here with that frozen air they blow around," and we sat a long time without saying anything. Finally a waiter came and told us we would have to go because it was closing time, and we drove uptown. Harvey said, "Why did we leave so early?" and I said, "It's not early. They closed up," and he said, "Oh." Then we were standing in front of his house, and it was raining like everything. We stood under the street lamp that shines in Harvey's window and looked at each other. He wasn't wearing a hat, and the rain plastered his hair down tight on his head and dripped off the end of his nose. The rain came down, cold and wet, and beat into the mud-soaked grass and made little splashes on the sidewalk and ran down the gutter. Harvey held his guitar case close against him so the water wouldn't get in under the cover. "If this were the movies," he said, "I'd settle down and stay that way." He smiled, tightly. "Seems I just can't hold on to anything at all for long." I said, "Don't be silly," and we stood and looked at each other some more. Then, because it had been quiet too long, he said, "So long, boy. Be good."

I said, "See you someday," and he said, "Sure," and turned and walked up the front steps, slowly, as if he were very tired. He paused on the top step and turned around, one foot a step higher than the other one. "Well," he said, squinting through the rain, "life isn't like the movies, is it?" He went inside and shut the door after him, and I stood in the rain and wondered what everything was all about.

Six Delicious Flavors

You, too, have probably heard the soothing voice of an announcer painting a word-picture of a dessert in such expressive adjectives that your mouth begins watering, and you are just about ready to dash to the store for some of it before you realize it's the awful mess you had for dinner that night.—GILBERT STEIN

Meet the Consul

ROY CASPER

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1941-1942

MY SHOES DUG INTO THE THICKLY CUSHIONED RUG as I faltered into the German consul's Michigan Avenue office. I found it difficult to stand erect and yet to appear poised. It is not an easy job to interview a person of one's own social rank; it is even more difficult to interview a public dignitary. As I closed the heavy oak door, Dr. Georg Krause-Wichmann rose with stiff elegance from behind his mirror-polished desk, extending a hand that was especially trained and accustomed to the welcoming of friends and enemies alike. The handshake was firm; it gave one a feeling that he was meeting an old acquaintance after a lapse of several years; it was a warm, deliberate handshake. As he moved around the desk toward me he seemed to sink inches into the luxuriant maroon nap of the rug. Indicating a bright red leather couch he motioned me to sit down. The couch was well placed; it enabled one to look across the entire room. The consul graciously helped me with my coat; then, at the sound of a short staccato buzz, he excused himself from the room.

If I remember rightly, he said that he would be back in a minute. The minute lapsed into five. Why should some business take him from the room even before we actually started the interview? The diplomatic world is incongruous and strange. When it appears casual and indifferent it is merely camouflaging. I could not help wondering what was going on "behind the scenes." Nervously, as if I were being watched, I began to jot down brief descriptive notes of the room. To the left of the preposterously large desk and directly above the mantel was an oversize picture of the Führer; it seemed to dwarf the huge desk. The photographer had given the leader a somewhat forlorn and mystic gaze—the kind of picture of Herr Hitler that you rarely see. I was still trying to decide whether I liked the picture when the consul re-entered the room. His apology was flavored with a strong twang tasting of both a German and an acquired American accent. He might have been thirty years old or sixty years old—I couldn't tell. The severe lines of his dark Oxford grey suit emphasized the severity of his parched and drawn features; he was short, dark-haired, and stumpy. (I had been so sure that he was going to be a husky, well-built blond!) Although he was immaculate in his attire, his desk, that beautifully polished desk, was crowded with letters, magazines, jagged newspaper clippings, and cablegrams. One prominent corner of the desk was given to what appeared to be a family portrait.

Dr. Wichmann passed a gleaming, stainless-steel cigarette case toward

me and began chatting easily about a fire that had occurred in the Loop an hour or so earlier. His hand was steady as he lit my cigarette; he could hardly have been sixty. One of the several French telephones on his crowded desk pierced the silence of the room with its ringing. The conversation was short and hurried; the language shaded with rich German tonality. Almost before the consul sat down in his chair again a tall, rather handsome blond gentleman entered the office and nonchalantly took a chair directly across from the large red couch on which I was sitting. The coppery yellow of the intruder's hair blended with the rich tones of his British Tan sport coat. The leonine features of his face were strengthened by a deep saber gash on the left cheek. His long, slender, well-knit fingers were clasped and fixed in his lap. Neither the consul nor the gentleman seemed to be aware of the presence of the other. The consul failed to introduce us.

. . . .

"Yes, Hitler dissolved the old German Reichstag and held new elections because of the abundant corruption in the German government." Stressing the word "corruption," he passed me another cigarette. Throughout the last hour of conversation the blond gentleman sat unmoved in his chair with unseeing eyes. An embarrassed pause, and I began to resume my questioning.

Dr. Wichmann, with what great leader in history would you compare Hitler?

Pinching his lips together and matting down his shiny black hair, he answered with all the gusto of a pre-election speaker: "Why, with Abraham Lincoln, of course. Hitler is the German Lincoln. He has even surpassed the glory of Bismark in his appeal to the German people. Hitler is all that Lincoln was. Even these two men's theories of government are the same. Didn't Lincoln once say that democracy is what the majority of the people want? Germany of today is in a sense a democracy, for Hitler and his government are what the majority in Germany want." Our blond friend nodded his approval. "You see, Mr. Casper, democracy is too often confused with parliamentarianism. Hitler is performing the will of the people; hence, he is being democratic. You must understand that the Nazi belief is that common interest goes before private interest. The well-being of the majority must always be considered before anything else. Yes, Herr Hitler's principles and Lincoln's are one and the same."

My mind became confused; my thoughts disarranged. Lincoln—democracy—Hitler—will of the majority—common interest before private interest. But didn't Lincoln say that democracy was also the protection of the minority? The ashes from my cigarette fell on the rug; quickly I rubbed the ashes into the rug with my foot. But the blond gentleman noticed the mishap. It was most uncomfortable to know that I was being

constantly watched and that my smallest action was being scrutinized by the gentleman with the unseeing eyes. For a moment I wanted to blurt out some sort of apology, but the gentleman's wary aloofness was too much for a mere apology. And, besides, did the incident warrant an apology? Dr. Wichmann inhaled his cigarette too deeply—then a short choking cough.

"Mr. Casper, you asked me a while ago whether or not race hatred is taught in Germany. You must excuse me if I should sound too impetuous when replying to this charge. It is a charge, you know. It is most difficult to reason with one who differs in opinion with you. That is the trouble with the world. It is constantly misquoting, misjudging, and otherwise maligning every action and word of our great Leader. There is no race hatred in Germany."

But, Dr. Wichmann, what about the Aryan race theory that—

"Aryan race theory! Aryan race theory! Mr. Casper, it is my belief that if you and others like you would not be prejudiced against everything and anything related to the great German Reich you would be able to understand the theory which you question. I would rather have you believe that the Aryan race includes all peoples except Jews."

Chinese, Russian, Indian, Slav—all peoples except Jews—Negro, Czech, and German, too—a strange race, indeed!

"I hope my explanation is sufficiently clear; it is, isn't it? You have a wonderful country here, Mr. Casper. I have just finished a tour through the West and was impressed by the enormous riches of the country. Your country is so situated that it would be impossible for it to be attacked. It shouldn't be impossible for Germany and the United States to come to a complete understanding with each other. Hitler is more than willing to come to an understanding with this bountiful country of yours. It is a wonderfully located country and has most ideal conditions in regard to climate and natural resources. Why, America is practically self-sufficient. It is the regret of the leaders of the Reich that America is so alienated from the new Germany in thought and in principle."

The consul gave a quick glance at his wristwatch. It was getting late and we had already passed nearly two hours in conversation. He passed his cigarette case again; we both offered to light each other's cigarette; too much kindness can become most embarrassing. He began to walk away from his desk and toward the couch where I was sitting. I could see that he was maneuvering toward me to make me understand that he was becoming impatient with my incessant questions. But I was determined to ask one more. He was now standing directly before me; I moved over slightly and motioned for him to sit down. He was a gentleman; he sat down.

Dr. Wichmann, if your country is so willing to come to a complete understanding with America, what is the purpose of the German Bund organization, which has drawn so much attention during the last year through its

subversive activities? I was looking sideways at the consul; he glanced across the room toward the blond gentleman and moved slightly over toward the end of the couch; the proximity was making me uneasy; maybe I shouldn't have asked that one.

"Hitler disowns the Nazi Bund; Germany disowns the Nazi Bund. Its members are neither American nor German when they raise the swastika above the American flag. We have nothing but contempt for the organization and for Fritz Kuhn. Herr Hess about two years ago gave strict orders to the Bund organization to disperse. It is British propaganda that links the Bund to Germany."

There was a sharp meaningful tone in the voice. The answer was startling; the speaker more startling; it was the blond gentleman and not the consul who had answered my last question. Now more than ever I wanted to know who he was. But suddenly, and without another word, he rose and left the room. The consul rose now, too, and crossed to the window to stare at the traffic below. There was an unpleasant lull in the conversation that implied that all that would be said had been said. I walked toward him, thanked him for the interview, and left the office. As the secretary opened the large, swastika-adorned door that led to the elevators, I turned around for a last look at the office. The blinds had been drawn; it was six o'clock, a half hour past office hours for the consulate.

.

The streets were crowded with people returning home from the thousand-and-one offices that line Michigan Avenue. Busses and automobiles crept along the pedestrian-choked streets. The traffic lights blinked their red and green eyes as if they resented the crowds. I walked down the three hundred block, entirely absorbed in what the consul had said during the interview. Perhaps I was prejudiced against Germany. Didn't the consul say that Hitler didn't want the war and that it was entirely England's fault and that not Germany but England was the aggressor? Nearing the corner newsstand, I fumbled in my pockets to find some change. I placed the three cents in the slot and took the paper from behind its stone weight. In a second I was startled back to reality by the tabloid's three-inch headline—GERMANY INVADES GREECE.

Loan Desk

By this time the room was filling up with students, and the loan desk looked like a brass rail bar on Saturday night. I couldn't help thinking that here was a real opportunity for a student who was looking for a way to defray his college expenses. Yes, without doubt, a coffee and doughnut stand would do a land-office business in front of the loan desk, serving pick-me-up's to students who were weakening under the strain of waiting for their books.

—GEORGE R. CLARK

Growing Pains

HELEN DEAN MILLER

Rhetoric I, Theme 10, 1941-1942

I GUESS I FIRST BEGAN TO FEEL THAT THINGS WERE DIFFERENT after Kelly had left that Saturday night. He was still the same broad-shouldered, easy-going, likeable Kelly with whom I had graduated from high school; Kelly, who had taken me to my Junior and Senior Proms; Kelly, who had sent me my first orchid and who, consequently, had become first man in my heart. He was still the same boy; but—was I still the same girl?

Two months of college had changed me in many little ways. My greatest ambition had changed from the acquisition of a letter-sweater (Kelly's) to the annexation of a fraternity pin (anybody's). And my conversation, which had once been sprinkled with references to Ed Silvers, who had shown such promise at Evanston High School, was now filled with comments about Bruce Smith, Moser of the Aggies, Juzwik, or Jack Crain, about whom Kelly knew almost nothing. I no longer drank milk to keep my complexion clear but drank beer to save face in another way. Kelly had made new acquaintances and learned new things in the office where he was working, but I had gone ahead of him in too many ways. I was growing away from him, I could see that.

I could see that I had grown away from him, and as I looked about me I realized that I had grown away from so much else that had been, unquestioned, a part of my life. My friends—the girls with whom I had always associated—were no longer so close to me. They had made new friends and had new diversions. They were only mildly interested in what I had been doing, and—fair enough—I didn't care much about their petty difficulties and triumphs.

My older relatives, the neighbors, and my parents' friends all looked at me with more searching eyes. Aunt Anna, who had never gone to college and who had never particularly liked me anyway, now began to wait for some word or action on my part which she could pounce upon as a sign of intellectual snobbery. The man next door, who had always seemed to leer, more or less, now called me "Betty Co-ed" and positively drooled. Mrs. Doe, with her characteristic lack of tact, asked me cheerfully, "Don't your home and friends seem a little dull and crude now that you've been gaining so much culture at school?" I must have flushed, but I took a deep breath and answered so sweetly that she never got the point, "Yes, some people around here *do* seem crude."

Brainless as she is, the woman had really shaken me with that remark.

I was ashamed to admit to myself that my family did not seem quite so polished as it had before. I wished with all my heart that my father would wear his coat to the dinner table and that my mother would stop discussing finances in front of the neighbors. My little brother began to resemble a dirty little pig, and even my college-bred sister said "he don't."

I began to think about the hundred little annoying things which the family had always done but which had never bothered me before. I was surprised that I could ever have been so uncultivated as not to have noticed them. How utterly crude! I was angry and bored and dissatisfied. Monday could not come too soon.

When I was once again a part of the high life and witty conversation of the crowd with which I associated at the University, I felt that I was in my element. I felt that life was good and that there was a place in the world for me. I was cocksure and happy. People looked at me and laughed at my acid comments, for, I like Pooh-Bah, they said, was born with a permanent sneer.

But that sneer became an expression of agony when I was again sickened with another sharp attack of pain from my appendix. And though the girls in my corridor were sympathetic enough for a while, they had other things to do. When I complained that I was not feeling well, Tom was just a little too willing to bring me home early. "You're no fun tonight," he said. "Something seems to have taken the edge off your wit."

And as I lay between the cool sheets, waiting for the ice-bag to draw enough blood away from my side to ease the pain, I began to cry uncontrollably. I cried from the pain; I cried from injured pride to think that my own particular little world could still go around without me. And I thought of the care and attention I always received when I was ill at home.

I thought of how, the last time I was ill, my mother bathed my forehead with cool towels. I remembered the tall glasses of fruit juice and the flowers she brought me. I remembered my sister's buying me the newest copies of *Vogue* and *Mademoiselle*; and my little brother's taking a dime from his bank and bringing me a bag of peanuts, which I could never eat but which seemed to him the greatest gift for any occasion.

In the oppressive darkness of that night I visioned all the family and the many things they had always done for me. My face grew hot beneath the fever as I blushed with shame. I remembered my supercilious attitude of only a few days before, and I was ashamed of my about-face, which no one could possibly notice but which seemed so painfully obvious to me.

"The minute things go wrong I go bleating back to the fold," I argued with myself. "I'm grown up now. I'm cultured. I have no further need for the care that was maybe good enough for me before I was old enough to steer my own course—."

This effort at self-justification fell short, and I cried as I realized that

I had, actually, been a snob. But as I drifted off to a restless sleep, I glimpsed vaguely the base on which I could safely anchor my thoughts. Yes, two months at the University had changed me, but it had not educated me. One can only become educated when he gets over being a snob.

“ . . . and the livin’ is easy.”

JAMES COLLINS

Rhetoric I, Theme 5, 1941-1942

BABY DODDS WAS RECOGNIZED AT ONE TIME AS THE best drummer in the country. The best jazz drummer, I mean, of course: very few negro musicians turn to the classics. I happen to know Baby because I spent almost every summer evening of 1941 in a tavern where he played. I wanted to learn his drumming technique. Before the summer was over, I had learned a great deal about the man himself.

In the first place, Baby plays with abandon—he just doesn’t care. If he wants to take a solo, he simply nods to the piano player and starts playing his fine rhythms. He never makes ugly faces or chews gum wildly: all that belongs to his past. His “I’ve-got-a-lot-of-living-to-do” days are over. He taps his drums quietly, subtly, more in a teasing way than any other. He starts the rhythms for a great climax, begins to build toward it, and then never reaches it, but sits back in his chair and laughs. He laughs at the people on bar stools who don’t know whether they like him or not but clap because of his reputation. And he laughs with his piano player at the irony of playing such fine music for Philistines. But he laughs good-naturedly; he’s over being hurt. He doesn’t want justice; he just wants to be left alone to play and laugh.

In his youth Baby always played exciting music—jungle tom-toms or thundering, crashing cymbals. He was fighting then—he hated and loved vehemently, and it all showed in his drumming.

That’s all over now. Baby has relaxed and settled down to his laughing, because he had to give up. His feelings lost their strength.

When he plays the blues, as he does most of the time, he has trouble being gay and carefree. He has to drink fast and plenty, and then play, and then drink more. The blues remind him too much of his early life—of New Orleans, of the street kids fighting, playing, and never worrying, of Johnny, his equally great brother, whom he watched die a slow and cancerous death; of his days with Ellington, Hines, and the Harlem Hamfats. He thinks of how old he is getting; of that pain from too much bad liquor, and of that damned left hand that is beginning to stiffen up.

All these things he sees too clearly when he has no gin in him. They must all be there to keep him going, but not seen so vividly as he sees them when he's sober. They're all too real and painful, and they must be kept in a mist—must be there to inspire but never to hinder.

Baby is pretty far gone. He has even forgotten the reason for his drinking. Now he just grabs the small shot glass in his trembling fingers, downs the soothing liquid, inhales deeply from his cigarette, and laughs at the death that he knows will soon take him. He laughs at the drums which he lightly and subtly teases. They are his only means and reason for existence.

Doc Porter's Office

KENNETH SELLERS

Rhetoric I, Theme 4, 1941-1942

WITH RELUCTANT STEPS I TURNED INTO THE DOOR-way between Doolen's Barber Shop and Gossard's Self Help Grocery on East Athens Street and began the ascent of the dingy stairs to Doc Porter's office. I stopped once to read a particularly interesting bit of obscenity penciled on the wall, then continued, with hand to aching cheek, and foreboding, heavy as lead, in my vitals.

When I reached the top I turned left into the little hall that smelled of anaesthetics and alcohol, blood and pain, and entered the door lettered, "Dr. Porter—9:00 to 4:00 weekdays—Sat. by appt."

Odors like those in the hall enveloped me and brought back the sensations of needles being pushed into my gums, and Doc's old foot-power grinder boring, like a finger from hell, deep into my brain.

I stepped across the worn linoleum where previous visitors had left their tracks in the dust and greeted the sole occupant of the room. It was Percy Bady, the town's leading elbow-bender and touch artist.

"Hello, Perc," I gorgled, through my swelled jaw.

"Hi, kid," he said, grinning, making the purpose of his visit obvious by exposing his half-dozen yellow snags. The conversation was terminated by this exchange of hellos, and I seated myself in the chair just north of the one occupied by my fellow condemned, and attempted to forget my fears in a 1924 *Saturday Evening Post* I found among the welter of old *Tribunes*, *Readers' Digests*, and *Colliers'*, which lay covered with dust on the corner table. I then minutely examined everything in the room except the magazine.

Percy's flabby body spilled over the chair like foam on a stein. His left hand ran over and over his brushy chin; his right hand was busy removing a hang-nail from the thumb with the nail of the index finger. He seemed to

be listening intently to Doc's quavering voice murmuring encouragement into his patient's ear as he ground and pedaled and pedaled and ground. While he waited, Perc made two trips to the outer hall, and returned each time loosening the neck of his blue cambric shirt, so that I could tell he was using something more than fortitude to steel himself for the oncoming ordeal.

In a few minutes, which I spent in trimming my finger nails with my teeth, the door on the other side of the partition closed noisily. Perc rose to his feet, spread his legs apart, and with one hand and a peculiar bending of the legs known only to the male, adjusted himself in the crotch. Thus prepared, he lurched forward and rounded the end of the partition. I could hear him explaining: "This damn snag been hurtin', and this here 'un been raisin' hell, and I jist decided to have all the sonsabitches out. You can jerk three today I guess."

To keep my mind off such things I began counting the bearded men in the faded old photograph of the Doc's graduating class, which hung on the east wall. I soon tired of this and began speculation on the possible contents of the huge roll-top desk that faced me. The idea was pregnant with possibilities, and I must have spent at least thirty seconds on it before letting my mind wander back to the reason for my visit to the office. I next tried guessing the number of fly specks on the office windows, and how long it had been since they were washed. But it was no use. I found myself picturing the needle entering Percy's gums. By the thin thread of sounds I imagined the Doc was asking Perc how long his teeth had been hurting him while the anaesthetic took effect. That's one good thing about the Doc, I told myself, and it's probably what's responsible for the trickle of business he gets; he never delivers dissertations on politics, or his family, or the merits of the Dodgers, or the reason for Joe Louis' supremacy in the ring.

A couple of choking groans and, a moment later, the sound of someone spitting made it plain that one tooth had come out. I thought I heard Doc say, "Here she is, Perc. You oughtta be glad to get that outta yer head." A couple of grunts announced that Percy was in complete agreement. The removal of another tooth, and still another, was accompanied by the same sounds. Finally the squeak of the instrument rack's being pushed back against the wall and the click of the forceps on the marble-topped instrument table indicated that the job was through. In my mind's eye I could see the three teeth lying on a crimson-spotted cloth on the top of the cabinet.

I heard Doc take a few steps, and then the clank of a metal door opening and the sound of a lusty expectoration made it clear that he had deposited his cud of tobacco in the huge coal stove. The steps continued, and the opening of a door was followed by the splashing of water. That meant that the dentist must have gone to the sink in the back room and filled the yellow-stained glass with water to rinse the blood from Percy's mouth.

The spittoon on the side of the red-plush chair would now smell of whiskey as well as of Doc's tobacco.

A little later. "Oh hell, Doc, I ain't got six bucks. You'll just have to take this five and put the rest on yer books."

"All right, Perc," came the answer over the partition.

The door snapped shut. I rose from my chair, tossed my magazine on the table, raising a minor dust storm, and fearfully entered the next room.

Newsboy's Saturday Night

HERSHEL HERZOG

Rhetoric I, Theme 6, 1941-1942

THE WIND SWEEPS AROUND THE CORNER IN GUSTS. IT is very cold. Three forlorn-looking figures stand there, beating their arms against their sides to keep warm. The *News* truck is late tonight. It's eight-thirty already, and Maxie's headlights haven't nosed around the corner down at the other end of the block yet. We wonder what's keeping him.

At last we spy the welcome gleam working its way up the block. Harry runs into the candy store to tell the rest of the boys that the truck is coming. They had gone in to keep warm and to watch the "hangers" play the pin-ball machines. They swarm out of the store as the truck pulls up. A mad rush ensues as each tries to get his papers first. We three who braved the cold are already getting our orders filled. Maxie curses as I delay in getting my papers off the truck platform.

"God damn it! I'm late enough as it is without you dopes keeping me waiting! Get your damn papers off my truck!"

"Shut your trap," is my only retort.

I swing the load off the truck and into my wagon. Off I trot, pushing the wagon in front of me. My breath comes in gasps as I pound up Rogers Avenue. The cold air cuts my lungs. I run because the sooner I can get my papers on the street and sold, the sooner I can go home. I meet my partner, Lennie, at our corner. He has already put the *Mirrors* and *Americans* together. We start on the *Newsies*, quickly and expertly sliding the sections together. We have been working with each other for three years, and hence we operate very efficiently. By a quarter to nine Lennie has gone off to cover the route and I am "working" the cars on the street.

Saturday night is our big night. We sell the early editions of the Sunday papers, making two cents per five-cent paper and two and one-half cents per ten-cent paper. The turnover of papers is very large. We sell as many as one hundred and fifty papers on the street as well as those we deliver on the route. The newsboy lives, so to say, for Saturday night.

Our corner is the intersection of Bedford Avenue and Eastern Parkway. Whenever the traffic light is red for Bedford Avenue, I run up and down the aisles formed by the waiting cars, shouting, "He-e-ey-yo! Whad'ya read! *Sunday News, Mirror, American?* Get your Sunday pape'!" When the light turns green on Bedford, I run over to Eastern Parkway and repeat the process. From nine till twelve I shuttle back and forth, selling papers here, there, and everywhere.

As I take up my position at a quarter to nine, the big flow of traffic is toward the residential district. My shouts bring a flurry of demands from the car windows at first. I am hard pressed to keep up the pace. I fling change about with abandon. Soon, however, the homeward traffic slows down, and with it, my business. I take time out and sit down on the curbstone with a sigh. My money apron bulges a little in the nickel compartment. I don't feel the cold much now.

Soon the flow of cars reverses. The headlights come roaring out of the darkness from the Flatlands. I cross over to the opposite corner and take up my stand there. Up and back, up and back, up and back I walk. . . . My head begins to hurt. The gasoline fumes are taking effect. My ears and toes get numb. I shout my cry hoarsely. "Hey! Whad'ya read!" Business slows down to practically nothing. Time hangs heavily. I clutch my papers closer to me and jingle my change a little. My gloves afford me no more protection. The cold has worked into my fingers. The eleven o'clock chimes sound in the distance.

Then I see Lennie trudging slowly up Bedford Avenue. He has finished the route. We talk quietly as we move about to keep warm. Suddenly the lights blink out on the marquee of the Lincoln Theater down the street. That is our signal to run over and cover the out-going patrons. We shout our wares and make a few sales. Then we retire into the darkness of the street with our remaining papers.

"I think we're going to pass 'em all tonight, Len," I murmur.

"Yeah," he retorts. "Mebbe."

Slowly the lights from the store windows and movie houses blink out. All is quiet. We loiter about, approaching the few passers-by in attempts to sell our last sheets. By twelve-thirty they are all gone. We walk slowly homeward, parting ways at Rogers Avenue.

"G'night, Len."

"G'night, Hesh."

A light snow begins to fall. I finally reach home, climb the stairs, and insert my key noiselessly into the door lock. All is dark as I enter. I grope my way to my room, undress wearily, and fall into bed.

"Is that you, Hesh?" I hear a voice saying.

"Yes, ma."

I drop off to sleep.

Spare the Club

HELEN D. MILLER

Rhetoric I, Theme 8, 1941-1942

THE SCHOOL SYSTEM OF TODAY EXPECTS OF ITS pupils far less rapid advancement than they are capable of making. No less than six years are spent learning to read, write, do sums, paint pictures, recognize a brown thrush in the springtime, and play Musical Chairs without losing tempers. I can recall at least five times in art class when I handed in identical portraits of a copper-colored Indian with peculiarly shaped jawbones. I made A on each and every drawing. Slight variations of this procedure carried me through grammar school with flying colors. I skipped two grades and never missed them; I added three-digit problems from left to right for over six weeks before my father—never my teacher—realized the mistake my extreme left-handedness had caused; I once drew a map of Oklahoma with the panhandle pointing toward New York and then placed California in the tip of the panhandle. Believe this if you can—there were other students who were more confused than I was.

In junior high school, the teachers began to expect a little more of me. They began to object to my wrong-ended panhandles, and I began to get failure slips when my algebra failed to come out right. They seemed to care whether I was a moron or not, and began to think up soothing things to say to me if I should turn out to be one. I was to be passed along with the rest if I proved to be normal.

Somehow I *was* classified as normal, although I think hypnotism did the trick, and the following September I was routed around to high school. I can still remember all the beautiful good intentions I had when I went to classes the first day. I'll study real hard, I will, I will, I will But then what was the use of doing the whole Spanish lesson when one could figure out just which question he would be called on to answer as soon as he got to class? And English—was there any sense in learning all those irritating rules when they would be repeated word for word in your sophomore, junior, and senior texts? And tests—tests were a cinch. Some grind around you was sure to have studied and it was easy enough to make him tell. I had enough scandal on Mary Grimes to get me clear through plane geometry. What was a little blackmail for a grade?

In spite of the breeze of the first twelve years, however, I came to college scared to death and prepared to study. Study?—I don't know how. There are those who say it is not too late to learn. I hope that it is not. The mercenary turn of my character tells me that since I am actually paying

for this phase of my education I should get as much as I can from it. I wish I could have realized earlier the value of schooling. I wish, in fact, that someone had stood over me with a twenty-pound club and forced me to work. But this is a democracy. Our schools are governed by complacent adults, supported by tender-hearted taxpayers, who shudder at the thought of a willow switch. Simple human nature breeds in pupils the attitude to "do as little as I can do and still get by." And yet the instinct of fear is strong. If it proves impossible to teach first-graders to take the long view of education, dare I advocate the club?

Blades

A. L. POTTS

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1940-1941

STAMP COLLECTORS SAY THEIR STAMPS INTEREST THEM because each stamp tells the story of some person or event. I doubt, though, whether the stories told by stamps are half so vivid as the stories my collection would tell, if it could talk. Those told by my collection would certainly be more personal than the stamp stories, and mine would be eye-witness accounts. I collect knives and swords.

My hobby started several years ago, when I was on a camping trip. We had hiked all day and were making camp on the site of an old battlefield of the American Revolution. Here Clark's frontiersmen, invading the Northwest Territory, met and defeated a strong band of Delawares, who had been selling American scalps to the "Scalp-Buyer" in Detroit. All the fellows in camp knew the story of this battle. We often camped here, because we liked to build our fires where the founders of our nation had built theirs. Many tales of the early battles our forefathers fought were told around our campfires. Every one of us had a favorite battle which he had studied, had described over and over, and had become more fascinated with in each retelling. The battle which had occurred at this particular place was my own favorite; I had studied it in many different books, and I had read Clark's personal account of it.

On this day, I was camp cook. As I sank my entrenching spade to dig a fire-pit, I struck metal. A moment's feverish digging uncovered the object. It was an old Revolutionary sword, rusted and nicked, the grooves along its side filled with dirt. Its handle had long since rotted away, as had its wielder, and its hilt was nearly rusted through. A junk-dealer might give ten dollars for several hundred such weapons, but it was, and is, invaluable to me.

Think of it! This sword had seen action in my favorite battle. What a

story it could tell! What would it say of long hikes through frozen timber and across drifted plains? I wondered how many scalps of frontier women and children it had avenged, how many skulls it had laid open, how many red or red-coated stomachs it had stabbed before its owner fell, here on an icy battlefield. How had the hardy frontiersman who swung the weapon fallen? Had he simply met a better man than he, or was he shot from ambush, or was he tomahawked from behind? Of these things I wondered, and still wonder, as the old veteran sword lies silent in my hands.

Thus began my somewhat unusual hobby. Since then I have obtained many different kinds of knives and swords; and I have even branched into collecting arrowheads, axes of both stone and steel, war clubs, and many other weapons. Some of my prizes are a Sioux tomahawk, given to me by a friend who spent several winters among the Sioux; French, English, and American bayonets, all of which saw action in France; a bowie knife; and a knife ground from the handle of a spoon by a Union soldier in a Confederate prison.

My grandfather has promised me that when he dies I may have his Civil War weapons—a musket, a bayonet, a knife, and a short sword. A Confederate veteran I know has said I may have his weapons too. But sometimes I think I would rather not inherit the treasures of these two men. Something about them would set them off from the rest of my collection. I know too poignantly well the biographies of these weapons, because I know the men who owned them.

In my room are relics from battles all over the world, relics which could tell of hot lead and cold steel; of bloody, cursing men; of victory and defeat. I don't see how anyone can waste time over little pieces of paper with glue on the back.

Gull Flight

Lonely gull,
Odd angle against the sky;
Wheeling, crying strong,
Partner to the waters sighing,
Coming near.

Lonely gull,
Soft, gray, lost in the sky,
Soaring, fading fast;
Searcher,
Drifting far.

—TRYGUE JOHN MASENG

Snake in the Grass

GILBERT McCONNELL

Rhetoric II, Theme 10, 1941-1942

IT WAS THE DAY AFTER SCHOOL WAS OUT FOR THE YEAR and everyone should have been happy, but Tom Rogers was wearing a sour expression. He came up to where I was mowing grass and sat down in the shade and watched me. He didn't say a word, and I didn't stop to talk because I wanted to get done in time to go swimming. In a couple of minutes Wally Huchel was sitting beside Tom. I knew there was going to be an argument, so I tried to think of something to break down their resistance. After a dozen furious rounds across the lawn, I still hadn't thought of anything, so I went over to the shade and joined them.

Wally said: "We're dissolving the company. If you want to play nursemaid to a flock of rattlesnakes, that's your business. I never heard of a snake farm till you mentioned it. Besides it's going to cost a lot more than we thought."

"Yeah," said Tom. "My twenty-five bucks would buy a lot of sodas. I'm afraid of snakes, anyway."

I tried to look relieved. "Okay, fellows, that's swell. I mean—well, after all, if you don't think it's worth it—" I started to move away.

Wally glanced at Tom. "We didn't say definitely that we were going out of it."

This time I was relieved. They went home and I went swimming. It was a swell afternoon.

A couple of evenings later, as I was dressing for a date, Tom and Wally came in. They were carrying half a dozen large books and some magazines.

"You were right," Wally admitted. "Rattlesnake farms have a future. Take a look at this stuff."

"I'll look at them tomorrow," I promised. "I've got a date in half an hour."

Wally opened a book. "We'll leave 'em for you, but glance over this page now and see what you think of it."

They had found everything that anyone would want to know about snakes. From those books we learned that the diamond-back rattler, which we knew to be quite common in our area, is one of the largest and most poisonous of all rattlesnakes; yet it is also the laziest and least aggressive. A rattler ordinarily will not strike unless it is molested, and unless it is suddenly surprised, its rattles give the intruder a fair warning. Contrary to superstition, the snake does not leap from the ground and strike. It cannot possibly strike more than its full length, and rarely more than half its

length. When the snake is disturbed, it throws itself into a coil for protection, with its tail in the air and its rattles buzzing, but before it strikes, its body forms a lazy "S." We found several references to the use of snakeskin in the leather industry, and mention of snake farms, but these passages gave no direct information that would help us in our work. From one pamphlet, however, we learned definitely that the meat of rattlesnakes is canned and sold. From the best available material we inferred that this industry was still somewhat of an experiment, but that did not shake our faith in our enterprise. It looked pretty good to Wally and me. Tom was still against it.

Around ten o'clock I remembered my date. It was pretty late even to call her and apologize. For a few minutes I mutilated the King's English with various brands of profanity, directed, of course, at Tom and Wally, who had been the cause of my forgetting.

"Aw, calm down," said Wally, who had been reading peacefully during my verbal tornado. "Who cares about women, anyway? There'll always be snakes."

"Yeah," echoed Tom, "there'll always be snakes." He was looking at me when he said it, so I asked him for the five bucks he owed me.

Together Wally and I got Tom at least mildly interested in our plan. We spent the next morning looking for a place to keep our "pets." All along our parents had made serious objections to the whole idea, and they absolutely refused to let us keep them near home.

When I came home for lunch I learned that Marge had called me three times during the morning. She called again while I was there, and excused herself for breaking our date. Her car had overturned somewhere and she didn't get home until the next morning.

That afternoon Tom came through with the only help he had given thus far. He had obtained permission for us to use an old pasture field on his uncle's farm. Since it was just outside of town, the location suited us perfectly. We began work immediately by staking off a plot fifty feet square and digging a trench around it. Since the place was outside of town, we had to find some way of transporting materials to it. After a great deal of bargaining, we paid ten dollars for a dilapidated Model-T truck, which Wally, with some inherent spark of mechanical genius, finally induced to run. We spent the next day hauling old bricks, which we laid in the trench in the same manner that the foundation is laid for a building. At regular intervals we set strong posts, and between them erected a framework of boards. Upon the brick foundation we built a smooth wall of metal roofing about four feet high. It didn't look bad when we had finished, and we thought it should keep a snake in his place.

The first afternoon that we set out to scour the rocks of Rattlesnake Bluff was blistering hot. All of us wore heavy hip boots that seemed to

burn the skin where they touched our bodies. Wally was sweating under the weight of a heavy cage, and Tom carried a .22 calibre rifle. Since I had been unanimously elected snake-catcher, I didn't have to carry any of the equipment. I was also permitted to take a good lead through all particularly dense growths of weeds and brush. We were almost worn out with climbing over the rocks when we found our first rattler, a big fellow, sleeping comfortably on a large flat rock. The problem of getting the snake into the cage had never bothered me, but now that the first trial had come, I didn't know how to start. Finally deciding to make an attempt, I took the cage and walked toward the snake. When I was within a few feet of him, he wrapped himself into a coil and his rattles began to buzz. I have heard snakes rattle many times, but this one sounded particularly dangerous. I backed away, careful not to make any sudden movements. While we were discussing new methods, the snake disappeared among the rocks.

That experience would probably have been our last attempt at snake catching had we not met a fisherman who showed us the proper technique. He cut a strong forked stick about four feet long, and cut the prongs down to about eight inches. He then got a gunny sack out of his boat, and we started hunting. When we found a snake, the fisherman took the stick and walked toward it, holding the stick in front of him. The snake naturally struck at the stick instead of striking at the man. With a quick movement he set the fork of the stick over the neck of the snake and threw his weight upon it. When I was sure the situation was under the fisherman's control, I brought up the cage, and set it against the fork, with the snake's head inside the door. The sack had been placed over the screen to make the cage dark. The fisherman slightly decreased his pressure on the stick, and the snake crawled quickly into the cage.

Within the next ten days we captured fourteen snakes and dumped them into our pen. One of our greatest problems was feeding them. We gave them birds, mice, and any other small animals that we could get. We soon found that they preferred their food alive. This made our job even more difficult. They did not seem to like their captivity, for they spent most of the time circling around the prison walls. They couldn't have been more tired of it than we were, for all our efforts to contact either the Florida canning factory or the leather industries ended in failure.

The minute that Wally and Tom walked into my room, I knew that something had happened. They had on boots, and both of them were carrying rifles. I was soon informed that we were going snake hunting. During the night a bull had escaped from a neighboring farm and had wrecked the fence around our snake pen. Tom's uncle had made it plain that we were going to find and kill every one of the snakes that had escaped. On the way to the farm we reviewed our summer's work. I admitted that it

had been my idea in the first place, and I told them that I would take all the blame if the snakes killed anyone.

Tom, Wally, and I stood looking down at the pile of dead snakes—fourteen of them. I was thinking of the work we had done to start our snake farm. Wally and Tom were probably thinking what fools we had been.

"Well," I said finally, "we still have the skins. We might preserve them some way and maybe find a market."

Wally gave me a murderous look. "We've still got the carcasses too. The old man said to bury 'em deep. Anybody bring a shovel?"

Bus Stop

As the huge blue bus comes to a stop in front of the Greyhound Post, the quiet, easy life of the country is ended. The beating exhaust of the bus and the clanging of cups inside the Post create the rhythm of the city, its beating allegro and clanging discords. The stage is set for the city dwellers to present their way of life. Cigars, cigarettes, coffee, and pie, those are the props for these temporary migrators. Their theme is speed—more time to find loopholes in the federal income tax, less time for digesting food. That is the act presented by the city dweller: *Speed at All Costs* is the title.

When the beating exhaust becomes a deep roar, the bus begins to move, and the Post settles back to its accustomed country quietness. A farmer across the road slowly chews a plug of tobacco as his horses pull an earthy plow across his rich, black land. Pigs are heard squealing, and a chicken runs across the highway.

—JOHN FEAGAN

It's a Disease

Today I walked into a second-hand book store. Scanning the dusty shelves, I found two old books, which I carried out with me. There was nothing particularly valuable about them from a monetary or literary standard, but I was attracted by the style in which they were written. One concerned woman's wear at the time of the first World War. I was interested in the book, first because of its revealing illustrations of what women wore in the war days, and secondly because of the air of authenticity and sound conviction the authoress displayed in her writing. What finally led me to purchase the book was a passage from a chapter on cosmetics, expressed in typically expert and confiding fashion: "Not one woman in a thousand washes her face properly." This, I thought, was certainly a good introduction to, and, indeed, a strong defense of, the use of cosmetics.

The other book dealt with home remedies, recipes, and farm cures for animals and humans. The publisher addressed the first page of the book to the salesman representing the publishing house. It informed the salesman of his duty to see that humanity was not deprived of this wonderful work. The page said in effect that to fail to provide humanity with this work was like failing to deliver a vital serum to a plagued community. Why do I add such books to my library? Merely, I suppose, because of an urge I cannot resist, a disease similar to a woman's mania to purchase soup bowls on bargain days even though her cupboard is over-supplied with soup bowls.—GEORGE COFFARO

The Industrial Spy

PAUL YOULE

Rhetoric II, Theme 8, 1940-1941

SINCE THE FIRST PART OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY labor and capital in the United States have been in almost constant conflict. The Industrial Revolution with its factory system severed whatever personal bonds of interest there were between the two forces. The worker became a draft animal. He worked long hours, under unsanitary conditions, often competing with exploited women and child labor. Advancements in machinery and widespread mass-production made no man indispensable to the completed product. Labor only gradually realized wherein its defense lay—organization.

But capital has had its own interests to look after. When labor unions were considered bolshevik-infested radical groups, as indeed many were, it cannot be said that capital interests had nothing to do with reinforcing that belief.¹ However, although capital has used several weapons against labor, the most effective seems to have been the labor spy, with his motto, "Smash the Union!"²

In 1937 Congress appropriated an original \$15,000 to the Senate subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, popularly known as the LaFollette Civil Liberties Committee. Senator LaFollette of Wisconsin was aided by Senator Thomas of Utah in revealing an astounding story of spying on workers. After some of the startling revelations brought to light, the committee was indefinitely supported by Congress. It has never failed to produce sensational news. From an opening clue, a financial statement rendered to Chrysler Corporation by Corporations Auxiliary, Senators LaFollette and Thomas proceeded to clear up a very hazy and sketchy picture.³ Detectives raided the offices of some of the bigger corporations, hiring spies in the hope that some incriminating evidence might be found. When the detectives arrived, all the corporation officers proceeded, with apparently good intentions, to assure the detectives of their innocence. When the company books and records and files were searched, not one bit of evidence could be found. Only one thing was out of the ordinary. The waste-paper baskets were all full of torn records of some kind. These scraps were taken to committee headquarters, where slowly the pieces were put together, jig-saw-puzzle style. When the puzzle was finished, the facts were there.⁴

¹Calkins, Clinch, *Spy Overhead*, New York, Harcourt Brace Co., 1937, 8-9.

²Huberman, Leo, *The Labor Spy Racket*, New York, Modern Age Books, Inc., 1937, Ch. II.

³Calkins, *op. cit.*, 16-38.

⁴*Loc. cit.*

But even with the records of the employers, the spy agencies, and the testimony and confession of spies, it was hard to pin the spy-hirers down. They forgot very easily all their past actions.

After lengthy grillings, however, all these minute details began to form a clear picture of the efforts to prevent the growth and spread of unionism. Mr. Huber Blankenhorn, industrial economist on the NLRB and advisor to the LaFollette Committee, estimated that in April, 1936, there were 230 spy agencies, largest of which were William J. Burns International Detective Agency, Inc., Pinkerton's National Detective Agency, Railway Audit and Inspection Co., Corporations Auxiliary, and Sherman Service.⁵ The names of some of these organizations certainly do not suggest spy activities, and this fact, combined with the elusiveness of their officials, made conviction very difficult. Estimates of operatives in these agencies vary from 40,000 to 135,000.⁶ One labor leader stated that he never knew of "a gathering large enough to call a meeting and small enough to exclude a spy."⁷ The cost of spies can be estimated from the General Motors expense sheet, which recorded payment of \$994,855.68 to agencies from January, 1934, to July, 1936.⁸ Conservative estimates place the money spent by all companies in the United States during one year at \$80,000,000. Other big names in industry that used spies include Chrysler Corporation, Aluminum Company of America, Greyhound Lines, Firestone Rubber Company, Kellogg Company, Standard Oil, Statler Hotels, Western Union, Borden Milk. The list is almost unending.⁹ Practically all big corporations considered the expense of spies as an important and necessary item in their budget.

The work of the spies is, first, to prevent formation of a union, or, second, to cause dissension and factional struggle inside an already formed union. To set up a hypothetical case, the XYZ Corporation has decided that there is danger of a strong labor organization within its factory. XYZ knows where to get spies. To practically every factory of moderate size there are sent advertisements and inducements by the spy companies masquerading under some false front, such as Railway Audit and Inspection Company. The XYZ Corporation is guaranteed that soon all the power of the union in its plant will be destroyed. Next, the detective agency sends a spy to the XYZ factory. The spy is given a job where he can "rub shoulders" with the workers and where he can associate with them. He becomes a "good fellow" and is soon elected an officer in the union because of his apparent deep interest in labor. He advocates strong union action against the management and becomes a close friend of high officials in the union.

⁵"More Spies on Labor," *New Republic*, XCI (April 22, 1936), 303.

⁶Huberman, *op. cit.*, 6.

⁷*Loc. cit.*

⁸*Loc. cit.*

⁹*Ibid.*, Ch. I.

His wife and children become intimate friends of the wives and children of other union members. *All the time he is writing detailed reports to the management of the XYZ Corporation concerning the actions of the workers—what they say, what they do, what they think.*

The most coveted position in the union for the spy is that of secretary-treasurer. When the spy holds this position he can secure a complete roster of members or, as a last resort, can cripple the union by running out with the treasury. To show how fully spies cover union meetings, the *New York Times* of December 17, 1934, reported that Matthew Smith, secretary of a local tool and die makers union, testified that "several weeks ago he had inadvertently lost a copy of the minutes of his union meeting, and he had received an even more detailed statement of what had transpired at the meeting from a detective agency which had 'covered' the meeting through its own operative." While the spy is a member of the union, all of the secret meetings become open books to the management, and when the spy is an officer, all of the private records become available.

When the spy for the XYZ Corporation hears any worker other than himself agitating too much, the report goes to the XYZ management and soon the offender is fired. He is not only fired but black-listed as well. Frequently, skilled craftsmen are completely barred from their trade by the blacklist. Mr. Edwin R. Smith, member of the NLRB appointed by the President, said, "I have never listened to anything more tragically un-American than stories of the discharged employees of the Fruehauf Trailer Co., victims of a labor spy. Man after man in the prime of life, of obvious character and courage, came before us to tell of the blows that had fallen on him for his crime of having joined a union. Here they were—family men with wives and children—on public relief, black-listed from employment, so they claimed, in the city of Detroit, citizens whose only offense was that they had ventured in the land of the free to organize as employees to improve their working conditions."¹⁰

When it is found impossible to kill a union completely, there are many subtle, underhanded ways to render it powerless. When the spy gains the confidence of the union men, he suggests that the officers of the union are crooked and he causes the union members to be suspicious and distrustful of each other. This feeling is definitely not conducive to intra-union cooperation. If a spy is caught, this disclosure leads to more suspicion. Each worker has a tendency to suspect his fellows, and in turn they suspect him of spying on them. The LaFollette Committee learned of a labor union in Flint, Michigan, which had shrunk from a membership of 26,000 in 1935 to 122 in 1936. (Maybe the remaining 122 were all spies.) Lawrence Barker, a Pinkerton spy working in the General Motors plants at Lansing and

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 28.

Fisher, testified that these plants were 100% organized at one time, but after the spies had finished, there were only five officers left.¹¹

Often some clever spies completely block every constructive action proposed in the union by spiking every such plan. Since few union constitutions are written by men familiar with law, almost any action by the union can be thrown out as being unconstitutional. By mere technicalities alone, much work can be stopped. The clever spy manages to find or create two factions in the union, and then he subtly plays one faction against the other. A good spy will become a member of as many union committees as possible, sabotaging the work of each. The spy realizes the power of strikes, and he also knows the results of a poorly timed strike. By calling for a strike when public sentiment is against labor or when the management is able to withstand it, the spy can succeed in his deadly work. When the time is really "ripe" for striking or demanding their rights, the spy convinces the union that conditions are not perfect or that there is no chance of winning.

I have thus far considered mainly the use of spies hired outside the factory, who know exactly what the effect of their work is. The picture is even blacker when we view the workers in a factory who are "hooked" into becoming spies against their will. Frequently the hooked man is willing to betray his fellow workers, but most often he is blackmailed into becoming a spy. The hookers search for a good prospect, being very particular about their choice. Red Kuhl, former spy who testified before the La-Follette Committee, testified that in hooking, "first you look your prospect over and if he is married and has a family, that is preferable. If he is financially hard up, that is number two. If his wife wants more money or if he doesn't have a car, that counts."¹² After the victim is selected, he must be approached tactfully. He must never be told his real job until it is too late to back out. The hooker usually tells the hookee that he represents a group of insurance companies who are about to offer rates to the company or that a chamber of commerce or a stockholders' association wish information about the progress of the company. It is impressed upon the victim that he is really helping his fellow workers and himself. Once the reports come through from the new spy, he becomes a permanent spy. If he realizes what his job is, he is told that if he squeals, his signatures on messages will convict him in the eyes of his friends.

When proposed and fostered by the officers of an industry, company unions have in the past been merely automatons, following the wishes of the management. How then, could labor be persuaded to join the company unions? The spies have had a great part in this persuasion.¹³ "Why should we pay

¹¹*Ibid.*, 20-21.

¹²"Behind the Scenes," *Nation*, CXLVI (January 1, 1938), 733-34.

¹³Bowden, Witt, "Freedom for Wage Earners," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science*, CC (November, 1938), 198.

national presidents, treasurers, and vice-presidents who are thousands of miles away and who have no interest in us?" and "Why not keep all the money we spend for dues here in our company union and be sure our money is used here?" are arguments advanced by the spies, the latter argument being quite appealing to those workers who have been victimized by a union racket of high fees. Many company unions are honest in their attempts to give labor a fair deal, but so many are not that we can call company unions a menace.

Not only do spies spy on workers; often spies spy upon spies. In the spies' own midst, there are often traitors who side with labor. Traitor spies often pose as being antagonistic toward labor and at the same time they hand in reports that are completely false. When there is little labor activity and the spy doesn't have much to write, he must "pad" his reports in order to give the employers what they want—news. This tendency makes necessary the employer's hiring a great number of spy agencies, each spying on the other until, finally, hardly anyone knows who is spying on whom.

These abuses of capital against labor seem to point out just one side of the story. The labor unions haven't been completely the "fair haired lads." They have had unnecessary strikes, terrorism, riots, and occasional infestations of communism. Since there are two sides to this, as to every question, mutual cooperation is necessary for a better relationship. By fully airing these practices to public view, we can help to clear up the labor-capital turmoil. In underhanded dealings such as the labor-spy racket, years of unnecessary waste of life and money have resulted.

Unfortunately, the future for the industrial spy looks good. According to Robert R. Brooks, in *When Labor Organizes*, "Development in the future will probably be in the direction of greater subtlety. The possibilities of variation in methods are great and employers who are willing to pay the very high prices charged by espionage agencies may not have difficulty in keeping a step ahead of countermaneuvers."¹⁴ In spite of this prediction, I believe that with less underhanded work in both capital and labor groups, with less of the bullheaded attitude that both groups have recently taken, the spy can be discarded permanently.

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Democracy at Work

I might add that West Frankfort is more Americanized than Chicago. This may be a rash statement, but I think not. West Frankfort typifies the American standard of being the "melting-pot of the nations." We have Poles, Italians, Germans, English, and all other nationalities living side by side. They don't segregate into their own little groups, with Italians in one part of town, Czechs in another, and Bulgarians in still another. They live side by side just as they work. A Montenegrin, working in the mines, might have a Frenchman for a buddy, or a German might have a Russian for his. They learn to trust each other and, therefore, learn each other's good points. When you are working in darkness with only a small "bug-light" for illumination, with noisy machinery to drown out the sounds of falling coal; or when you are in a close place and your buddy is operating the machinery, you learn cooperation. It is a vital necessity. There is no fighting. Each is working for the other as well as for himself. This is true democracy.—MARION B. WALLS

Worry?

Recently many articles have been written regarding an old, but only recently recognized, scourge to modern mankind—worry. All of these articles dwell at length on the folly and utter uselessness of worry; and many of them offer theories, some advanced by psychiatrists and others merely the products of self-styled philosophers who urge their readers to profit by experience. Each article attempts, by either sound reasoning, incomprehensible theories, medical statistics, or quotations from Shakespeare, to dissuade the modern man from his addiction to this pernicious mental disease. Firmly he is warned that worrying is infinitely more detrimental to health than smoking and can almost certainly be relied upon to diminish one's life span by at least ten years. The effect of all this upon the man who worries is extremely simple; it causes him to worry about worrying, provided that he has no more pressing problems to ponder at the moment.

—MAX HENCY

Home Life in Manila

L. W. WILKES

Rhetoric II, Theme 7, 1941-1942

TO MOST PEOPLE, THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS ARE A cluster of steaming tropical atolls infested with snakes, head-hunters, and dysentery germs, and anyone living there is either native, army, or crazy. To a few people, the Islands are a movie setting for Dorothy Lamour—balmy, quiet, Elysian. The various and conflicting opinions are like those of the blind Hindus who were asked to describe an elephant.

If you were to announce that you were moving to the Philippines, you would probably be swamped by a wave of advice. People, meaning well, but totally ignorant of the facts, would tell you what to take, what not to take, how to act, and what to expect. For weeks after you had left, your ears would ring like conch shells with the echo of that surging sea of advice.

Take lots of shoes—you can't buy them over there. Take a canteen—you will have to carry your own drinking water. Take a gun—the natives all carry knives. Take a pith helmet. Take an atomizer of disinfectant. Take sterilized gloves. Take canned foods. Take handkerchiefs. Take boots. Take—

Take my advice. Don't believe a word of anything you hear about Manila's being a hard place in which to live. Most of those stories are based on propaganda spread by seven-day tourists. No one knows why a perfectly normal human being, who loves dogs, and who has never wished to poison his mother-in-law or kick infants, should suddenly, viciously, become a seven-day tourist. The ugly change is likely to occur whenever he decides to travel. If he stops in a place only one or two days, he is usually content to say merely that he has been there, but if he stays there the enormous space of one week, then he is lost. He takes excursions and supervised sight-seeing tours. He reads his travel pamphlets more carefully, and puts notes in their margins. He asks questions. He observes—for seven days. Then he returns to his home, and in a very short time the change is completed. Assuming a world-weary air, he tells bored lies about his tour abroad. Like an old lady with an operation, he recounts, with retouchings, the hardships he went through to bring his listeners first-hand news about life overseas.

Suppose, for instance, it was the Philippines. The drinking water there, he says, must be boiled, and while he was there, he had his socks washed in alcohol every night to prevent infection. Life in Manila is one hell of heat and quinine. Why, to live even in semi-comfort, one must keep four servants. Four lazy servants to keep living conditions bearable. Four

stupid, good-for-nothing, barbaric natives to do the work done in the States by one mediocre housemaid. . . . And somewhere in the midst of this harangue he starts frothing at the mouth and running in circles.

We kept four servants. Not to do the work of one, but for the cost of one. The type of work that they did could not be bought here in the States for less than a small fortune, but in the Islands it cost us little more than what we pay now for a cook and laundry.

Each servant considered himself the most important member of the household. The *lavandera* took three washes a week, and by pounding and wringing and sun-bleaching, got our shirts as white as the "after" picture in a soap ad. She would squat in front of a flat stone near a running stream, and pound our dirty clothes with a short club, wring them damp, and spread them on the grass in the sun to dry and bleach. Yet with all this rough treatment, I never found a broken button or a burst seam in any of my shirts.

In the morning, while my eyes were still shut, I could get up, walk to my clothes, and dress with perfect ease. Manuel, the houseboy, would always have them laid out by the time I woke up. This was merely the start of Manuel's day. He would serve breakfast, lunch, and supper, and help the cook wash the dishes. He would clean the entire house, wash all the windows, and dust every plane surface. If I had a date, or if my father was going out, Manuel would dress us, tie our ties, fold our handkerchiefs, chase our collar buttons, and see that we had our keys and money. Then he would fold back all the beds and arrange all the mosquito bars so that if we came home in a jovial mood we could get to bed with a minimum of trouble. In general, one of Manuel's days would end just in time for the next one to begin.

The chauffeur kept the car in shape, and played cabby to the entire family. Yet he was never too busy to fix a flat on my bike, or to run errands for the cook. He delivered personally all invitations to Mother's parties, and had to know exactly where each guest lived. If a dinner party were being given he would double as houseboy. Any carpentry or plumbing or odd jobs around the house were done by him, from fixing a leaky faucet to punishing the dog for a social *faux pas*. He ruled the garage, and the tool chest was his throne.

In the kitchen, the cook reigned supreme. He could order out even Mother, if he were in the throes of creation. I once saw him chase Manuel out of the kitchen with a butcher knife. I believe that Manuel had told him he was putting too much salt in the soup, so Juan grabbed up the butcher knife and carved himself a small piece of Manuel. Manuel left, hurriedly. The quarrel was soon patched up, however, and Juan went on cooking as before. He would work for hours surrounded by steaming kettles and spitting skillets, but he got results. His oven-warm bread was

better than cake, but he preferred to make cake, because of the pretty designs made possible by icing. There was always candied orange peel or cinnamon cookies in the pantry, and his desserts were marvelous, but his real triumph was curried chicken with rice. It was at once rib-padding and soul-satisfying. You chewed it and swallowed it just like any ordinary food, you took six helpings, and you felt well-fed; but still it could not be called food. Food is for the body. The Olympian gods did not have to eat, but ate for the sheer pleasure of the thing. Juan's recipe for curried chicken was devised on Olympus.

It is easy to see that a Philippine household is no place for an ambitious housekeeper, used to endless bustling and tidying. It is a place to relax and to let things take care of themselves. It is a place where the servants become hosts, and do not allow you to do one thing for yourself. Several times Juan and Manuel have come into the parlor and spoken to Mother in this way:

"Madam, you do not entertain enough. It has been six weeks since you last gave a dinner party. Since then Colonel Kelton and Captain Anderson have entertained you. Why do you not have another big dinner soon?"

It is a perfectly natural question to them. They are masters of their trades. Juan can cook a better dinner and Manuel set and decorate a better table than any other servants in Manila. Why not give a big dinner and let the world know? And so you give a dinner, and Manuel stands at the head of the table and beams when the guests praise the flower arrangement, and you can fairly see Juan glow as he comes to the door to make sure all his food is eaten.

It is quite a pleasant arrangement. At first. Then you suddenly find yourself merely the guest of honor in your own house. To an energetic manager, the situation is unbearable. You fight. You struggle. But you can't win. The servants have you right where you want them. So your home becomes a place where you can just sink into a semi-coma, a hotel-existence, a place where you can enjoy complete relaxation with no worries about dropping a cigarette ash on the rug, or leaving a white ring on the piano. It may be hard for some families to accustom themselves to a life of complete sloth, but the Wilkeses are a remarkable family. As Pooh-Bah might have said, "It revolted us, but we did it."

Horizon

Mile after mile of waving grain greets the eye in the flat wheat fields of Kansas. The midday sun beats down from a cloudless sky, sending the temperature soaring. Here and there a cluster of farm buildings appears like an oasis in the desert-like fields. Soon reapers will be mowing the grain with large combines, and chaff will fill the air. Nearby, steel-grey rails span the continent and the streamliner defies distance and time.—ROBERT JAMES

Hell on Earth

ROBERT WRIGHT

Rhetoric I, Theme 5, 1941-1942

TEDDY ROOSEVELT ONCE SAID, "THERE ARE TWO things about the French I could never understand or tolerate; they are French Guiana and the French Foreign Legion." Not only Roosevelt, but the whole world has wondered about the great French penal colony. Periodically, since Guiana's birth in 1852, humanity has been shocked by tales of terrorism and brutality emanating from there. But so completely has French Guiana guarded its dark and dismal secrets, only vague and garbled rumors of conditions in Guiana have reached the general public's ear.

The man in the street doesn't associate the name Guiana with the more famous name Devil's Island, and, if he did, the chances are he would have to consider several moments before settling on their location. The reason for this amazing lack of knowledge is quite simple. The French government and the administration of Guiana could never hope to keep the partial truth of Guiana from the world, but they have done the next best thing. They have endeavored, since the famous Dreyfus case, to obscure and destroy all documents and witnesses that could supply to the public the evidence needed to corroborate the stories and rumors that have come out of the place. The French government and the Guiana administration have, in effect, reduced the colony to one of those evils which, from constant repetition and insufficient evidence, become boring to the public.

Such was the case until recently. Then *Dry Guillotine* appeared. The world became "Guiana-conscious" again, for here was an account written by René Belbenoit, an escaped prisoner from Guiana. But not an ordinary prisoner! Not a semi-intelligent, illiterate, bestial hulk of a man! Here was a burning intellect, kept alive in a frail ninety-pound body. After spending fifteen years in this hell, in a climate and under treatment that had killed thousands of men—big, strong men, far better equipped by nature than he—René Belbenoit, literary, versed in several languages, living but for the day he would tell the world of his experience, escaped from Guiana. This emaciated mite of a man, all his teeth gone, his body racked with fever, with but a few years to live after the privations he had suffered, arrived in America as a stowaway on a tramp steamer. He had not traded his health for nothing—he carried with him a precious oilskin-wrapped bundle containing thirty pounds of closely written manuscript. From that thirty-pound bundle *Dry Guillotine* was made, a work which treats the subject so clearly and objectively (and objectivity must have been especially difficult for one who had suffered as long and as deeply as had Belbenoit) that no

reasonable person could doubt it is the absolute truth. The work is fully substantiated by documented evidence: Belbenoit worked for some months as custodian of the official archives of French Guiana, cataloging them, by the special request of the Civil Governor.

Dry Guillotine is the odyssey of a man's will, of the fighting, unquenchable spark, the mysterious, intangible force that drives men on after their bodies have quit. At the age of twenty-one, Belbenoit was sentenced to eight years at hard labor in Guiana. Upon arriving there, he was faced with the choice all newly arrived prisoners faced—the choice of staying there, trying to endure the burning sun, the omnipresent mosquitoes and insects, the bad housing and poor nutrition, the brutal treatment of the guards, and the back-breaking jungle labor camps, where prisoners labor naked in the sun and die like flies; or trying to escape. The very air seemed to whisper the answer—"escape or die."

And Belbenoit tried. For four unsuccessful attempts he tried, for fifteen years of the most terrible hardships he tried, until, finally, on his fifth try, after twenty-two months of unbelievable sufferings, he escaped through the jungles of Central and South America. On this series of escape attempts René weaves a fascinating pattern of prison life. The dreaded islands—*Illes du Salut* (Isle of Salvation), including Royal Island, home of *La Case Rouge* (the Crimson, i.e., the Bloodstained, Barracks); Saint Joseph, where the terrible solitary cells are; and Devil's Island, the tiny island on which political prisoners are kept—are painted with an unforgettable brilliance. The terrible labor camps of *Chavein*, *Kourou*, and *Godebert*, the blockhouse at *Saint Laurent*, the sordid capital city of Cayenne, the *libères* (freed convicts, still required to remain in Guiana), the *fort-à-bras* (roughnecks), the *momes* (sexual perverts), and the *incos* (incorrigible prisoners) leap into life before your startled eyes. They hold you half thrilled, half sickened, in your chair.

I believe that *Dry Guillotine* will stand the test of time: its theme, penology, will be of interest to all generations, and it is perhaps the greatest expression of man's inhumanity to man ever written. The book has great sociological significance. In it can be seen, if one looks closely, reflection of the anomalies of the French race. In no other race can such great contrasts be found, such lofty idealism on one hand and such vicious corruption on the other. Here is a people who advocate democracy, which includes, I believe, fraternity of man; yet they subscribe to and support an institution like Guiana. Though great scandals out of Guiana have rocked France from time to time, though crusades for the destruction of Guiana have periodically swept the nation, Guiana still remains, a living symbol of the great fault in the character of the French. Much of France's present difficulty can be directly traced to the inexplicable attitude of the French towards evil in their midst. Their failure to make a good showing in the

present war is an unhappy result of the nation's apathy to corruption in government circles. The Germans swept down on a poorly officered nation, and the result is now history.

Sociologists, human welfare workers, child educators, criminologists, parents, and all others having the interests of the species at heart, and even those that don't—the anarchist, the nihilist, the malcontent, and the criminal—will find in *Dry Guillotine* a vital interest; for it is something that affects every one of us. No one can say when he, or someone dear to him, will be faced by the law's long arm; and when that happens you would like to feel that the law you face is a fair and just one, that it will give you all due and just consideration, that if you are convicted, you will not have to suffer such a man-destroying, soul-destroying hell as Guiana, that you will have a chance to serve your term and to rehabilitate yourself afterwards. For these reasons, and because it is a profound study of the meaner side of human nature, I recommend *Dry Guillotine*.

Union Now vs. Union Later

WALLACE FRANK

Rhetoric II, Theme 5, 1941-1942

PERHAPS YOU HAVE HEARD OF UNION NOW, ONE OF the latest movements aiming at the prevention of a Nazi-dominated world. If so, you know that the movement proposes the immediate union of all English-speaking nations under one supreme government, modelled after the American system, with the establishment of intra-Union free trade and the consolidation of citizenships, military forces, postal and communication facilities, and currency systems. The idea was fathered by Clarence K. Streit, former foreign correspondent for American newspapers, and is being supported by a considerable number of organizations in both England and America. If the plan were officially adopted, immediate peace would be offered to the Axis powers, with no concessions of rights by either side. For the time being all armies would be withdrawn from battle lines and occupied zones, and all nations would return, temporarily at least, to the pre-war *status quo*. The Axis powers and other nations could join the union if they were willing to accept the constitution.

No one can foresee all the results of such an extensive change in international affairs, no matter how well qualified he is as an authority. Various possibilities might produce anything from world chaos to an ideal system of international government. However, after careful consideration of both sides of the question, I have come to the conclusion that the plan would not work satisfactorily. Taken simply from the economic viewpoint, Union

Now has its merits, but other powerful factors enter the question. Nations are made up of citizens, and we must regard them as groups of people organized to secure their welfare, not simply as plans of government.

To begin with, Union Now, being organized on the American governmental plan, would never be acceptable to the British. There are 130,000,000 Americans to 80,000,000 of all other English-speaking peoples combined. The system would give America control of the House by a large majority, securing our interests, but definitely imperiling the interests of the others. Even if English ideals and American ideals were synonymous, the British would never allow their sovereignty to be taken from them so easily. They love their freedom as much as we love ours, and would refuse to give it up voluntarily even if they could be assured that we would be sympathetic towards their interests. That alone is enough to insure failure, if every other aspect of the plan were satisfactory.

But Union Now is thoroughly unsatisfactory on several other points also. For one thing, it would not help Britain win the war a bit more than America is helping now. We could not send any more supplies than we are sending now, nor could we send them any faster. The government of Union Now, if patterned after our own, would not be a bit more powerful or efficient than the two existing governments working on cooperation. In fact, it would probably be larger and more unwieldy, for the widely diverging interests of a much larger number of people would have to be taken into consideration in the passage of laws. The necessary reorganization involved in the combination of our military forces might temporarily destroy the efficiency so essential for military success, and place the Union at a disadvantage. Also, the very size of the army and navy would make it more difficult to keep them functioning smoothly. Hitler has already demonstrated the advantage of small, fast units against heavy, cumbersome armies.

After the war, how could the Union possibly effect a better and more lasting peace than England and America can by working together? The drafting of a successful treaty of peace depends on the wisdom of the statesmen drafting it, not on the political connection between their governments. Whether England and America exist as one or as two countries at the end of the war, they will both be striving to better world conditions with a lasting peace.

England and America could not get along under the same government in peace-time anyway. They cannot be compared to the thirteen colonies, which had many common bonds drawing them together and encouraging union. England and America have little in common other than their language and their ideals of government. Generally speaking, the Americans are, in their way of life, radical and progressive, and the English are conservative. This division of tempers would form the natural basis for the formation of political parties, and England and America would be on oppo-

site sides of the fence at the outset. Each nation has its own peculiar customs and traditions, and each would be loath to let them be placed second to those of the new "super-nation." With such strife and disagreement between the two nationalities, it would be quite natural for England to withdraw and refuse to comply with our wishes. She would quite understandably feel that we had taken advantage of her at a critical time and taken her sovereign rights away, and the affair would terminate in bitter resentment between English and Americans, rather than cooperation.

Then, too, other nations would look upon the Union with resentment and distrust. They would feel that it was merely an attempt to monopolize world trade and secure an advantage over the smaller nations. Just as many South American countries have recently shown themselves wary of too close an alliance with the United States, so would all the non-English nations refuse the invitation to join the great English "trust" and subjugate their sovereignty to the wish of the vast English majority.

Intra-Union free trade is one of the few merits of the plan, but even that does not require the establishment of a political union. If England and America decided tomorrow to eliminate completely all tariffs against each other, the same benefits would result, without the restraint of a political alliance. A complete new money system would have to be developed in one or both countries, and the consequent unavoidable jostling of securities exchange might easily result in a stock market crash and another depression.

Finally, I suspect that not only would Union Now be unacceptable to the people and impractical from a material point of view, but it would also fail to give moral support in the war effort. It could not by itself build up the morale of the English and keep it high. The magnificence of it might be temporarily inspiring, but when the novelty wore off and practical problems began to arise, morale would sink again. And it certainly would not scare Hitler. He can see the flaws in the plan, also, and he knows that the Union would be no more formidable an enemy than England and America allied.

If there are no advantages to be derived from the Union, why was it ever introduced as a possible solution to our problem? Possibly because the founders of the movement did not believe the disadvantages outweighed the advantages; possibly because they want to see America in the war; or possibly because they had dreams of later confiscating the vast empires of Holland and France by taking them into the Union. It might also be a subtle attempt to shift a large part of the cost of post-war reconstruction onto America. Whatever the reason for its formation, Union Now would be about as unsatisfactory a political union as ever existed. So, at least, I must conclude, after as careful and unbiassed a study of the case as I am able to make.

I do not say that the United States should never unite with England, for it is entirely possible that conditions in the future will make such a union advisable. Nevertheless, these conditions must develop gradually; we cannot thrust such a radical change on an unprepared citizenry and expect it to succeed. Let us then look forward to Union Later, and dismiss from our minds the idea that Union Now could ever serve the purpose which it proclaims.

Rhet as Writ

Love—the most noblest of manly virtues of manhood during this time.

. . . .

Since the majority of high school graduates never attend college, they have no first hand opportunity to learn about sex.

. . . .

A successful football team is built around many things. One of the most important essentials is a strong mutual feeling between the coach and his men. That is to say, the players must have respect for their coach and he in turn must be respected by them.

. . . .

It is possible that there is a few people in the world, but I believe that it is highly irregular.

. . . .

I fell exhausted upon the bed a mass of whelps that constantly itched.

. . . .

Off comes my tie and my shoes follow suit.

. . . .

Here at the airport are seen these immense birds landing and taking off without the least little trouble. In fact, everything is timed to the minuet.

. . . .

One girl attempted to marry a young, French, navel officer but as soon as the tribe learned of this they cut her throat.

. . . .

Ingrid Bergman and Lana Turner are two of Hollywood's most talented and beautiful girls, but the over-development of their parts, again, takes away some of the spice and enjoyment that one should normally derive from their portrayals.

. . . .

I am not a war mongrel.

Honorable Mention

- Robert Stephen Apgar: *I Go Fishing*
T. G. Belden: *The Case Against Edwin M. Stanton*
Irving Bengelsdorf: *Copy Boy!*
Martha Corkery: *Barren Ground*
Jane Croessmann: *Black Is Our Bread and Our Misery*
Andrew Dennis: *Barren Ground*
Marilyn Divan: *Surrealism*
Clarence L. Dunn: *Radburn—A Town for the Motor Age*
Lois Gamet: *Morpheus and I*
R. Jean Gordon: *Grades Alone*
Beulah Griffin: *The Beginnings of the Johns Hopkins Medical School*
Lloyd T. Hanson: *Military Life vs. Yours Truly*
Frank M. Higgins: *Food for Thought*
John M. Hunter: *The Sales Tax in Illinois*
Edward Andrew Kmetko: *Music in Transition*
Sheldon Leavitt: *How Did It All Begin?*
Marian Mabree: *Ending: Navy Pier*
Leonard Marcus: *Tony*
Betty Martin: *Life in a Concentration Camp*
Doris Mojonnier: *The Duck-billed Platypus*
George Pohn: *Offset Printing*
Verne Purcelle: *Our Humble Servant—The Clock*
Margaret A. Robbins: *A Unique Theater*
Charlotte Rothschild: *To a "Greek" God*
William J. Schmelzle: *Fortitude*
Janice Silverberg: *Don Quixote, Twentieth Century Style*
Ruth A. Sokol: *I Promise Thee*
Anne R. Stewart: *Introducing Myself*
Paul Sullenan: *My Lady Nicotine*
August Uttich: *The Dwindling Number of Feminine Women*
Martin Wasserman: *Water Color*
Charles Weisenburgh: *Architectural Draftsman*
Bob Wells: *Victims of Barbarism*

